

Manitoba

Backlash prompts protesters against vaccine mandates to move away from Health Sciences Centre

About 100 people stood outside Manitoba Legislature, City Hall to protest vaccine mandates

CBC News · Posted: Sep 13, 2021 8:11 PM CT | Last Updated: September 13, 2021



A rally that was supposed to be held outside Winnipeg's largest hospital Monday afternoon was moved to the grounds of the Manitoba Legislature, then to city hall. (CBC)

A rally against vaccine mandates that was supposed to be held outside Winnipeg's largest hospital Monday afternoon was moved to the grounds of the Manitoba Legislature.

Similar events were slated to take place outside hospitals across the country, but the location of Winnipeg's event was changed at some point over the weekend.

- [**Politicians, medical groups condemn protests outside hospitals across Canada**](#)
- [**Nurses denounce anti-vaccine passport protest in St. John's**](#)

The events were organized by a group called Canadian Frontline Nurses - the same group that planned [a rally outside Health Sciences Centre earlier this month](#).

An organizer said the move was made following backlash after that event.

"The venue changed because we heard feedback on the negative impacts that it had at the hospital last time," said Shaun Zimmer, who is not affiliated with Canadian Frontline Nurses but said he helped organize Monday's demonstration.

"We want to make sure we're not causing any more divide."





Shaun Zimmer, who is not with the Canadian Frontline Nurses but helped organize the event said the group listened to feedback following a similar event earlier this month and decided to move the protest away from the hospital. (CBC)

About 100 people gathered to express their opposition to vaccine mandates and vaccine passports. Many people in the crowd held signs that read 'my body my choice' and 'stop vaccine passports'.

Manitoba is requiring front-line workers who work with vulnerable people to be vaccinated by the end of October. Failing that, employees must submit to COVID-19 testing as often as three times a week.



Fay Thomas, who said she's a former nurse, doesn't take issue with people who want to wear masks or get vaccinated, but doesn't think they should be mandated. (CBC)

"I just want people to know that we have a choice and that our Constitutional rights are being infringed on," said Fay Thomas, a retired nurse, who took part in the event.

"If this is the only way we can get people to pay attention, and for the government, for the politicians to listen, then I guess that's what we have to do."

The event was mostly quiet, and was advertised as a 'silent vigil.' Participants were asked to bring a flower and a note to leave in "honour of someone affected by COVID measures," according to the Canadian Frontline Nurses website, though it didn't appear any notes were left at the grounds.

Group says last event was misunderstood

On Sept. 1, hundreds of people gathered outside the Sherbrook St. entrance of the hospital and created traffic congestion that hindered the arrival of ambulances and hospital access for patients and staff.

Several people trying to enter the hospital told CBC they felt intimidated by the crowd.

That event drew criticism from many who felt it was disrespectful and dangerous to hold a protest outside a hospital.

- [Crowd protesting vaccine mandates causes chaos outside of Health Sciences Centre](#)
- [Hundreds in Steinbach protest vaccine, mask mandates in schools](#)

Zimmer also said there was a lot of misunderstandings about why they were there.

"There was a lot of misinformation, a lot of misunderstanding that people thought we were there against nurses," he said.

"But that was most definitely not the case."

"This is standing up for all of us, whether you want to get a vaccine or not, whether you want to wear a mask or not, freedom of choice to do so and move forward, that's the biggest thing."





About 100 people gathered to express their opposition to vaccine mandates and vaccine passports. (CBC)

Thomas said she was at the protest two weeks ago, wearing a mask, and said the event was peaceful.

"We just want our rights acknowledged, just like everybody else," she said.

"I have no problem with people who want to get vaccinated, if they've made that choice that's their choice. I don't want to infringe on their choice, just give me my choice and don't restrict me because I can see what's coming, the next step will be that I won't be able to go into a grocery store."

The group later walked to city hall and demonstrated there as well. No streets were closed for the demonstration, and though police were present, CBC is not aware of any incidents.

- [**Manitoba to limit restaurants, gyms, theatres, sporting events to fully vaccinated people**](#)
- [**Some Manitoba businesses choosing to limit service, not check patrons' vaccine status**](#)

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